

Puerto Ferro Light  
(Faro de Puerto Ferro)  
Puerto Ferro  
Vieques Island  
Puerto Rico

HAER No. PR-22

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
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# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## Puerto Ferro Light (Faro de Puerto Ferro)

PR-22

Location: At the entrance to Puerto Ferro, south shore of Vieques Island, Puerto Rico  
Position: 18° 05' 54" N - 65° 25'

Date of Erection: 1896

Present Owner: U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Coast Guard

Original Owner: Central Lighthouse Commission  
Colonial Public Works Office  
Harbor and Port Section  
Government of Spain

Present Use: Unoccupied

Significance: Puerto Ferro Light was established in 1896 as an octagonal tower on top of a rectangular dwelling. Its primary characteristics were a 5th order white flashing light every 5 seconds and a 12 mile range. The evidence is not clear as to lens and lantern manufacturer since it might have been either a 5th order lenticular Sautter & Cie. (USLHS #510 ?) lens with 37.5 cm. in diameter or a 1899 lenticular Barbier & Bernard 5th order lens also with the same diameter. The available information for each lens differs considerably. The Sautter lens had 4 panels; 2 flashing panels; 4 panels in the central drum and 5 prisms in each panel above the central drum and 3 prisms below. The 1899 Barbier lens had one panel in the apparatus, 3 elements in the central drum and 6 prisms on each panel above the central drum. The light was reflected by a silver plated metallic parabolic reflector. The entire lens revolved on a mercury float. The system was activated by a clock work. The clock cord had a 200 lb. weight that dropped through the center column in the tower's cast-iron stairway.

The original structure, abandoned in 1926, is in very poor condition (in the near future it will resemble Guanica and Punta Figuras if protective measures are not taken). The dwelling was identical to Point Mulas on the north shore of

Vieques Island. It was 16.2 x 10.6 x 5.7 mts. The principal door opened to both the vestibule and the tower located NW on the center of the dwelling. The keeper's quarters were located on the east side of the structure: one 4.9 x 3.2 mts. living room, two dormitories 4.9 x 2.55 mts., and the other 4.9 x 3.4 mts. An approximate 3.7 x 3.5 mts. room behind the tower base used to be the kitchen-dining area. On the west section were located the 4.9 x 3.2 mts. engineer's room, a 4.9 x 2.55 mts. office, and, finally, a 2.7 x 3.4 mts. storeroom which led to the 3.4 x 2.1 mts. oil room. The basic structure did not suffer major alterations until 1926 when it was abandoned, boarded up, and, subsequently, vandalized.

The tower had one door to the roof but no windows. The 3rd order lantern made of cast-iron, copper, and glass was circular. It opened to a cement gallery surrounded by a cast-iron balustrade.

The decorative elements shown in Punta Figuras were repeated in Puerto Ferro: neo-classic facades, the circle-rectangle decorated frieze, and the simple cornice elements are repeated in the tower. The floors also followed the gray-white checkered marble pattern.

Today, the entire lantern and cast-iron balustrade are gone, as well as all the wood work and entire sections of the marble slabs. The original brick Spanish well and cistern remain.

It is one of the last minor or local lights to be built that connected Punta Tuna and Culebrita Island Lights. The light was of crucial importance either to cross the Vieques Passage or Virgin Passage. It is also, although in poor condition, a good example of official neo-classic minor lighthouse style.

Transmitted by:

Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, August 1984; from the National Register Nomination prepared by Dr. Benjamin Nistal-Moret, August 1979.